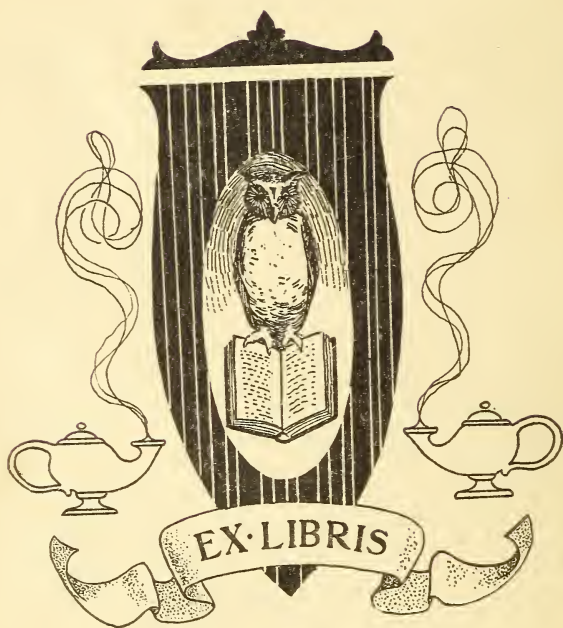


Life
at
Threescore and Ten
—
Barnes



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LIFE

AT

THREESCORE AND TEN.

BY

REV. ALBERT BARNES,

PHILADELPHIA.

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THE substance of the following discourse was delivered in the First Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, December 6, 1868, and was soon after published at the request of friends. It was revised by the author for the American Tract Society, and was going to press at the time of his lamented decease, December 24, 1870.

LIFE

AT

THREESCORE AND TEN.

THE DAYS OF OUR YEARS ARE THREE-
SCORE YEARS AND TEN. PSA. 90:10.

ALL earthly life, so far as we have an opportunity of observing it, has an outer limit ; a boundary which cannot be passed. Death reigns, and apparently has always reigned, in our world, for there is not now in the air, on the earth, or in the waters, a living thing that existed at the creation.

This limitation in regard to life is by

no means the same in all orders of beings. Each class of animals, of birds, of fishes, is subject to its own law in this respect, as if it were entirely independent of all other beings, and has a limitation of its own. Life may be almost momentary in one class, as in the insect that sports in the summer sun for an hour and then dies; it may extend, as in the old trees that stand on the African or Pacific coast, for many thousands of years. But still, there is a boundary which is not to be passed. It is not the same in the horse, in the eagle, in the elephant, in the gazelle, in the humming-bird, in the whale, and in man—in the oak of Bashan, the cedar of Lebanon, and the hyssop that springs out of the wall—for each and all of these have their separate laws of limitation, and that which belongs to one

cannot be transferred to another. A boundary has been fixed in each and every case beyond which no vigor of frame, no tenacity of life, no devices for restoring the wastes in the animal economy, and no remedial or recuperative arrangements can carry any one. Time does not modify this law. Improvements and remedies in other things do not affect it, or produce any change. The age of the horse, the oak, and the lion, is the same as it was in the days of Abraham, and, so far as appears, will remain the same to the end of time. So fixed is this law that it clearly proves that over all this there is a Presiding Mind; that the arrangement is the result of the will of the Great Ruler of the world.

Yet though the period of life in different orders of beings is so varied, it

is in each particular and separate order so regular, that it can be made the subject of most accurate calculation, and can be laid at the foundation of some of the most important arrangements in society. At the foundation of all this there is an important general law, the knowledge of which is now exerting an important influence on the affairs of men—a law, the reason of which no one can explain, but he who believes in the existence and the ^{superintending} providence of God. It is now established as certain, that of a given number of persons, almost precisely the same number will die in each year at the same period of life, and even ordinarily by the same forms of disease. In like manner, it has become the subject of most accurate computation that almost precisely the same losses of property will occur by

sea or on land—by fire or by shipwreck—so that the regularity of such losses can be made the basis of most important pecuniary calculations and responsibilities. This science, comparatively new, is the foundation of all the arrangements in annuity companies, in marine, fire and life insurance companies, the operations of which are founded on calculations made on the average continuance of human life, and the probability that any given number of casualties will occur, or that any given number of persons will die at any one period of life, in any single year. So accurate is this science that no investments are more safe than those which are based on such calculations, and that there is no class of pecuniary institutions that are more certainly destined to become universal. The world is not governed

by chance, but by certain laws, and the result of the operations of insurance companies will tend, like our study of the physical laws of nature, to confirm men more and more in the belief that there is a God, and that the world is governed by regular laws.

In man the usual limit of life is "threescore years and ten." By this it is not meant, of course, that no one ever passes over that line, but that this is the ordinary and common period beyond which man does not pass—as there is an ordinary and fixed limit in the age of the horse, the lion, the eagle, the humming-bird, the honey-bee. There are exceptions to most general laws, but there are no more in regard to the life of man than in other things.

It is remarkable that this was the allotted period in the time of Moses, if

the Psalm from which the text is taken was written, as it purports to have been, by him, and that the law has remained unchanged to the present time—just as the law in regard to the duration of life has remained the same in regard to the inhabitants of the air, the earth, and the waters. The life of the lion and the eagle has neither been lengthened nor abridged during that period, nor have these long centuries done anything to extend or diminish the length of life anywhere in the animal or vegetable creation.

This fact is especially remarkable in man, because the highest talent has been exerted to find out some method to lengthen his existence on the earth. One profession, found in all countries, embracing in its ranks those who have been among the most eminent in learning

and skill, has been especially devoted to this subject: to the inquiry whether the ordinary causes which abridge human life could not be modified or removed, and whether there could not be found in nature some hidden power—some “Elixir of Life”—by which the days of man might be multiplied upon the earth. Yet all in vain. No secret in nature has been discovered to check the ravages of death, and to make man immortal; and it is equally true that no secret has been discovered by which the settled law in regard to the general limit of life can be changed, or by which man can be carried far beyond the period of “threescore and ten.” In nothing has science been more baffled and rebuked than in this; and, much as it has done to remove disease, to alleviate suffering, to administer comfort to the

dying, or to increase, perhaps, the *average* length of life, it has done absolutely nothing to change the fixed boundary of human existence, nor is there now the slightest probability that it will do it in the time to come. The tables by which the calculations in life annuities and insurances are now regulated, and which are so accurate, will be as certain a basis for such calculations in coming ages, and those tables will continue to mock, as they do now, all the boasted achievements and promises of science.

In regard to *man*, and especially to man considered as a fallen and sinful being, and with reference to the problem of redemption, many reasons might be suggested why the usual limit of his probation should have been fixed at threescore years and ten.

The great purposes to be accom-

plished in the world can be thus better secured than they could be by one which would greatly protract the life of man. The present arrangement has all the advantage of bringing varied powers upon the earth to meet the new circumstances of the world in the development of the divine plans ; the advantage, perhaps, of bringing more actors on the stage, and of preparing more immortal beings for a future world ; the advantage of greatly multiplying the number of the redeemed, and consequently of glorifying the Redeemer and augmenting the joys of heaven ; the advantage of preventing the evils which would arise from a vast accumulation of wealth and power in the hands of a few individuals, and creating a permanent tyranny in the hand of a few men—it being far better for the liberty and happiness

of the mass of men that a man of accumulated or accumulating wealth should lose his hold on his property at the age of "threescore and ten," and that it should be distributed in society, than that he should be allowed to go on absorbing the wealth of the world for a thousand years—as it was of advantage to the world that Xerxes, Cæsar, Alexander and Napoleon should die rather than that they should live to confirm and establish a tyranny for centuries. It is an advantage to the world that men should die; that, having accomplished the great purpose of life, they should give place to others; and that what they have gained in any respect should go into the common stock for the good of the world at large, and for the benefit of coming generations, rather than that it should be retained by them-

selves under the form of vast monopolies.

At the same time it is to be remarked that a man will be more likely to attend to the interests of his soul when he knows that the affairs of the world are of so little importance to him, and that all that he can acquire must soon—very soon—pass into other hands, than he would if he felt that what he could gain would continue to be his, and would be constantly increasing for a thousand years. As man, therefore, is a fallen being; as his great interests lie beyond the grave; as this is essentially a world of probation; as all that any one can gain here is a trifle of no value compared with the great interests beyond the tomb; as it is desirable that he should constantly feel and realize this; as it is important that all the means

possible should be used to fix his attention on these facts, and to prevent his jeopardizing his eternal interests by neglect and delay; and as the period of seventy years furnishes ample time to prepare for the world beyond, and to secure the salvation of the soul, we can see that it is a wise and benevolent arrangement by which this should be the general limit of human life. Man must be content with this. He has no power to remove the limit. Science, time, experience, prudence, medicines, do nothing to modify this law of our being, or to secure to us any longer duration on earth than God has assigned us.

If an apology were demanded of one who has reached the period of threescore and ten, for his presuming to refer to himself and to his views of life, it

might be found, perhaps, in the following considerations :

1. That though, in the aggregate, the number of men who reach that period of life is not small, yet almost none give utterance in any public or permanent form to their own views and impressions in regard to that period of life, or to the results of their own observation and experience in reference to human affairs, church or state, during the time through which they have lived.

2. That the young, for the most part, hope to reach that period, and it may be presumed to be a matter not without interest to them, to know how life will seem to them when they reach it. It may be supposed to be useful to them, in forming their own plans, to place themselves, as far as possible, *in* that position, and from that "standpoint" to

inquire what is worth living for and what not; what will then commend itself to them as wise and good and what not; what the world is in reality, as compared with what it seems to be when the colorings of a youthful imagination are thrown over it in anticipation. Every young man has a right to catechise an aged man as to what life is; what the world is.

3. There is often an impression that old men take a gloomy view of life: that the result of their experience is merely disappointment; that all which they have to say is that the visions of early years have vanished, leaving nothing substantial or worth living for; that the world to them is gloomy, and that the effect of their experience has been to make them sullen, sour, and morose; that they see only decay and ruin around

them; that as age comes upon them they see in religion only corruption of doctrine, in morals only degeneracy, in political affairs only a weakening of the powers of just government, in science in its boasted advances only that which tends to sap the foundation of true religion, and which threatens the overthrow of all that hitherto has commanded the assent of the wisest and the best of the race, and which is essential to the well-being of society.

4. Every man who has reached that period of life *ought* to be able to say something which will be useful to those who are forming their plans, and who are looking out on the great world as the theatre of future action. He has indeed lived in vain who has passed so many years upon the earth if he has gained *nothing* that may be of use as

counsel to those who are to come after him—who has laid up nothing that will add to the common stock of human knowledge, or contribute to human improvement and to the progress of the world.

5. As a further apology for speaking in the manner in which I propose to do, it may be added that most of the things which I shall say might be spoken by one man as well as another, at my time of life. It is the mere fact that one *has* reached that period which entitles him to the privilege of speaking to a coming generation, or to give utterance to the results of his observation and experience, and not anything which has been peculiar in his own history, or because he has any special claim to be heard by the world. There was force as well as obvious fitness in what the young man

Elihu, as recorded in the book of Job, said, "Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom." Job 32:7. It is a common feeling among men that those who are about to leave the world should be allowed to speak, and that a respectful attention should be given to their utterances, whether those utterances are on the calm bed of death, or are the language of the martyr at the stake; whether they are the utterances of age, or of the criminal about to meet the just sentence of the law. For myself, what I shall say, if I shall say anything that will be worthy of attention, will be derived mostly from the mere fact that the seventy years which have thus been travelled over are among the most eventful that have occurred in the history of the world, and that those years them-

selves utter most solemn counsels to those who are to fill up the next seventy years of the world's history.

He who has reached this period must regard himself as now entering on the last stage of his existence on earth. He has reached the summit of life. He cannot expect or hope to rise higher. He has come to the top of the hill, and must soon pass over to the other side. He may find there—or may think he has found, as one sometimes does when he ascends a mountain—a little spot which seems to be level ground—a small area of table-land—a plateau—that spreads out a little distance around him. If he is permitted to walk for a few years on that plateau—that table-land—that level spot—it is all that he can now hope for. He can look for no greater degree of vigor of body or of

mind; for no greater ability to labor. That little spot of level ground which he seems to have found on the summit, spreads out before him with much that is inviting. He could not deny that he would, on many accounts, love to linger there, and extend his walk farther than he can reasonably hope that he will be permitted to do. He cannot conceal it from himself that though this little spot *seems* to be level, yet that it will soon begin to slope in the other direction, or that he may soon come to a precipice down which he may suddenly fall, to rise no more. The ascent to that little level or plateau was gradual and long. While ascending, it was uncertain whether the summit would ever be reached at all, and what it would be found to be should it be reached; whether it would be found

covered with clouds and agitated with storms, or whether it would be serene and calm and clothed with sunshine.

So one ascends a lofty mountain. The summit lies in the distance, now with bright sunshine settling on it, and now covered and obscured by clouds, and wholly shut out from view. In the ascent, as he passes from one eminence to another, now he enjoys a wide and varied and beautiful prospect; now he “fears as he enters into a cloud;” now the cloud lifts itself and discloses a prospect of distant woods and fields and rivers and villages and farmhouses, so varied and so beautiful as to reward him for all his toil thus far; and now a cloud settles again on his path, and the ascent becomes more difficult, more rocky, more steep; and then the cloud breaks away and the summit shows itself near, and his steps

are lighter, and his heart is more buoyant, as if all the difficulties were soon to be overcome. The summit is at last reached. It may be a sharp point of rock ; it may be utterly barren ; it may be covered with perpetual snow ; it may be enveloped in clouds, and there may be a raging storm of hail and sleet ; it may be a place so cold, so dreary, so barren, that he at once turns his footsteps and hastens down the path that he trod in the ascent: or he may find there a level plain ; he may have a glorious sunshine ; he may have wide and beautiful prospects—distant hills and valleys, streams and lakes and waterfalls, towns and villages and cultivated farms all around him, and the blue ocean in the distance, and he may linger there, and wish that he could linger longer—fully rewarded for all his toil and fatigue in

the ascent. The ascent was long and slow and gradual. The descent must be precipitous, quick, sudden. The termination is not far off—*the grave*.

Of one arrived at advanced years, a young man would have the right to ask, "How does life *seem* now? And how *ought* such views as one takes at the age of threescore and ten to influence those who are just entering on their course, in regard to their own views, plans, and purposes? In what way should a young man form his own plans if he would make that experience his own? In what way would a man who has reached that period form his plans of living if he could now begin life anew?"

I will tell you, in as few words as possible, how I feel at this period of life. What I shall say, I trust, will not make you gloomy, or dispirited, or sad. It

will not lead you to think that there is nothing worth living for, though I would hope that it might lead those who are setting out on life to modify their plans by a contemplation of the feelings and views which will come over their own minds when the plans of life are about to close.

I.

THE first thought is, that one who has reached this period has come to an end of all his plans, arrangements, and purposes, in regard to this world. The schemes of life, whatever they may have been, are ended. This is to him a *new* thought,—a thought which he has never experienced before, and of which he has not been before in a situation to form a conception ; and this thought I would be glad to impress on the minds of those who are younger : that the time must soon come when all their earthly plans must be ended ; when there will be no new schemes for them to form, no new purposes of life to execute.

It is, and must be, difficult for those who are yet in the vigor of life to form a conception of the state of mind when this becomes a reality ; when a man feels as he has never felt before, that there is little more for him to do. But though it may be difficult to form a conception of a condition so different from what he has as yet experienced, it may not be unprofitable to advert for a moment to the fact, and to state, as clearly as possible, what the feeling is, when this conviction first comes over the mind.

A man rarely forms any new plans of life at seventy years of age. He enters no new profession or calling, he embarks in no new business, he undertakes to write no new book, he forms no new friendships, alliances, or partnerships ; he cannot now feel, as he once could, that on the failure of one plan he may

now embark in another with better promise of success.

Hitherto all along his course of life he has felt that, if he became conscious that he had mistaken his calling, or if he was unsuccessful in that calling, he might embrace another; if he was disappointed or failed in one line of business, he might resume that line, or embark in another, with vigor and hope; for he had youth on his side, and he had, or thought he had, many years before him. If one friend proved unfaithful, he might form other friendships; if he failed in his chosen profession, the world was still before him where to choose, and there were still many paths that might lead to affluence or to honor; if he lost one battle, the case was not hopeless, for he might yet be honored on some other field with victory, and be crowned with glory.

But usually, when a man reaches the period of "threescore and ten years," all these things lie in the past. His purposes have all been formed and ended. If he sees new plans and purposes that seem to him to be desirable or important to be executed ; if there are new fields of honor, wealth, science, ambition, or benevolence, they are not for him, they are for a younger and a more vigorous generation. It is true that this feeling *may* come over a man at any period of life. In the midst of his way, in the successful prosecution of the most brilliant purposes, in the glow and ardor attending the most attractive schemes, the hand of disease or of death may be laid on him, and he be made to feel that all *his* plans are ended—a thought all the more difficult to bear because he has not been prepared for it by the gradual

whitening of his hairs and the infirmities of age.

Hezekiah, king of Israel, expressed the feelings of such a man, when, in the vigor of his years and in the midst of his schemes, he was suddenly smitten by disease, and brought apparently near the grave. "I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years. Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. The grave cannot praise thee; death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth." Isa. ch. 38.

A few remarks may illustrate this point.

1. It was a great problem so to frame the world, and so to endow man, as to secure the activity of the race ; and there are two great laws by which that activity is secured. The one is, that in each and every generation there is enough for all men *to do* ; the other is, that there is at any time talent enough to accomplish all that is *needful to be done*. In the numerous and various professions and callings of life ; in agriculture, commerce, the mechanic arts, the fine arts ; in the pursuits of literature and science ; in the education of the young ; in the necessary attendance on the sick, and the care of the infirm and the helpless ; in extracting ores and the precious metals from the earth ; in levelling forests, and in making roads, bridges, and canals ; in the works of architecture, ship-building, and machines for labor ; in navigating rivers and

oceans, there is always *enough* for any one generation to do : so much to do that none need be unemployed or idle.

At the same time, there is always talent enough on the earth to accomplish what is needful to be done. If, in addition to the usual employments of mankind, any great emergency arises ; if society has reached a point where it is to be raised to a higher level, and the ordinary measures of human endowment are not equal to the emergency, higher talent adapted to the emergency is brought upon the stage, and the affairs of the world are raised to that higher level, and move forward *on* that higher level till another similar emergency arises. Columbus, Galvani, Galileo, Newton, Watt, Fulton, Morse, appear at the proper time ; for God creates great intellects when he pleases, and brings

them upon the world to carry out his own great plans, when the world is ripe for them. No enterprise fails for want of talent; no created talent need be idle for want of employment.

2. Within a limited range men are so endowed that they may succeed perhaps almost equally well in one, or two, or three, or four professions or callings.* It is implied in this statement that that range is not large. A man may be a farmer, *or* a mechanic, *or* a merchant, *or* a sailor, and possibly he might succeed in either of these vocations. He may, therefore, make his choice between them, or may, to a limited extent, change from

* This was true of Michael Angelo. On his tomb, in the church of Santa Croce, in Florence, are inscribed the words :

“Michaeli Angelo Bonavatio,
E vetusta Simoniorum familiâ,
Sculptori, Pictori, et Architecto,
Famâ omnibus notissimo.”

one to another; that is, if unsuccessful in one, he may find success in another, or if any particular emergency in the world's affairs shall make an additional number necessary in one occupation, that emergency may be met by this adaptedness to different employments—this *play*, or room for free action, in the wheels by which the affairs of the world are moved. But no one can succeed equally well in all the employments of life. A man must, as a general law, be a farmer, *or* a mechanic, *or* a merchant, *or* a sailor, *or* a professional man; he must be either a lawyer, *or* a physician, *or* a clergyman; he must be either a poet, *or* an orator, *or* a man of science—he cannot be all. There have been a few men of so diversified talent that they have secured, in each of three or four departments of science, what would have made them

eminent if they had been equally distinguished in any one department; such men have been rare in the world.

It was necessary, in order to secure the accomplishment of the great purposes of society, that there should be this *play* in the endowments of man; that it should be so arranged that success might be secured in any one employment within this limited range; that there might be, to a certain extent, room for a choice in a profession; that there might be enough talent upon the earth at any one time to accomplish all the purposes of society, and that it might be certain that all these various callings and professions would be filled.

3. It is further to be remarked, that men are so endowed with propensities towards a particular calling, or with such an inclination towards a particular call-

ing, as to make it certain that what is necessary to be done *will* be done. This great matter has not been left to chance. God designed that all these professions and callings should be filled, and hence he made it certain in the very constitution of men, and in the arrangements of society, that that purpose should be accomplished. Hence it is that there are always those who are willing to cultivate the earth; to engage in the mechanic arts; to navigate rivers, lakes, and oceans; to dig canals; to explore unknown regions; to be the pioneers in extending the limits of civilization; to perform surgical operations; to attend in the hospitals for the blind, the dumb, the insane; to minister to the wants of the sick and the dying; nay, to engage in the most humble and menial employments. No profession or calling lan-

guishes because there are none who are willing to engage in it; no interest of society suffers because it is too laborious, or too perilous, or too humble, or too painful to be performed.

As an illustration of this thought, I may refer to the case of commerce—the necessity that there should be *sailors* in the world. There are few parents, if any, who would desire that their sons should be seamen; there are few who in fact do not oppose it when their sons manifest a preference for the occupation of a sailor. Yet the navigation of the ocean, the intercourse of nations by sea, the pursuits of commerce, are indispensable for the advancement of the race and the good of mankind. God designs that there shall be, in every age, persons in large number who will be willing to spend their lives on the ocean, and hence

there is among the young, in each generation, a sufficient number who manifest an early propensity for the life of a sailor; and hence, too, when this idea takes possession of the mind of a boy, nothing will ordinarily turn him from his purpose. No promise of ease or comfort or a more lucrative business on land, no attractions of home, no love of friends, no prospect of honor or of affluence in another calling, will turn him from his purpose, or drive the thought from his mind. God thus, in the furtherance of his own purposes, secures what could not otherwise be secured, by laying this purpose and this desire in the minds of as many of each generation as are necessary to navigate the seas and to keep up the commerce of the world.

4. In accordance with these principles, a man *may*, within a very limited

range, make a change in his profession. If he is unsuccessful in that calling which he has chosen ; if he finds that the profession is already full ; if he discovers that he is not fitted for it, and is not able to succeed in it, he may, in early life and within a limited range, exchange it for another, and within that range may find a door of usefulness or of honor still open to him. The young farmer may become a merchant or a student ; he who has been trained to the mechanic arts may become a member of one of the learned professions ; or he who has been destined by his early circumstances, or by parental purpose, to a humble occupation, may rise to the higher walks of life, and make his name known abroad in his own or in foreign lands. But no man can safely venture often on such a change. One such change may peril nothing ; per-

haps a second would not endanger the great ends of life, but beyond this no man is safe. Life is too short to make many experiments of this kind; and beyond what has now been suggested, life would become vacillating, and would pass away with no fixed purpose, and in the end man would have accomplished nothing.

5. To him, however, who has reached the period of threescore and ten years, no such change is usually possible; no such new plan to be entered on. The purpose of life is accomplished; the changes have been all passed through. There is no new profession to be chosen; there are no new plans to be formed; there is no new distinction to be acquired; there are no books to be written, no houses to be built, no fields to be cultivated, no forests to be levelled, no works

of art that are to be entered on. Painful as the thought may be, the business walks of life have no place for the aged man; there is no place for him in the social circles of the gay, in the mercantile calling, at the bar, in the medical profession, in the pulpit, on the bench, in the senate-chamber, in embassies to foreign courts. Distinctions and honors are no longer to be divided between him and his competitors; and the accumulating wealth of the world is no more to be the subject of partnership between him and others. Without plan now except as to the future world; his old companions, rivals, and friends having fallen by the way; the active pursuits of life and the offices of trust and honor now in other hands; the busy world not caring for his aid, and hoping nothing from him, it is his now—except

as far as the friends of earlier years may have been spared to him, or as he may have secured the respect of the new generation that is coming on the stage of action, or as he may do good by matured wisdom in counsel, or by the distribution of wealth accumulated in other years, or by an example of gentleness, meekness, and patience in the infirmities of age, illustrating the influence of religion and the blessedness of hope as he walks tremblingly on the verge of the tomb—to tread his solitary way, already more than half forgotten, to the grave. He has had his day, and the world has nothing more to give him or to hope from him.

Most men in active life look forward, with fond anticipation, to a time when the cares of life will be over, and when they will be released from its responsi-

bilities and burdens; if not with an absolute desire that such a time should come, yet with a feeling that it will be a relief when it does come. Many an hour of anxiety in the counting-room; many an hour of toil in the workshop or on the farm; many an hour of weariness on the bench; many a burdened hour in the great offices of state, and many an hour of exhaustion and solicitude in professional life, is thus relieved by the prospect of rest—of absolute rest—of entire freedom from responsibility. What merchant and professional man, what statesman, does not look forward to such a time of repose, and anticipate a season—perhaps a long one—of calm tranquillity before life shall end; and when the time approaches, though the hope often proves fallacious, yet its approach is not unwelcome. Diocletian

and Charles V. descended from their thrones to seek repose, the one in private life, and the other in a cloister; and the aged judge, merchant, or pastor, welcomes the time when he feels that the burden which he has long borne may be committed to younger men.

Yet when the time of absolute rest comes, it is different from what had been anticipated. There is, to the surprise, perhaps, of all such men, this new, this strange idea; an idea which they never had before, and which did not enter their anticipations: *that they have now nothing to live for*; that they have no motive for effort; that they have no plan or purpose of life. They seem now to themselves, perhaps to others, to have no place in the world; no right in it. Society has no place for them, for it has nothing to confer on

them, and they can no longer make a place for themselves. General Washington, when the war of Independence was over, and he had returned to Mount Vernon, is said to have felt "lost," because he had not an army to provide for daily; and Charles V., so far from finding rest in his cloister, amused himself, as has been commonly supposed, in trying to make clocks and watches run together, and so far from actually withdrawing from the affairs of state—miserable in his chosen place of retreat—still busied himself with the affairs of Europe, and sought in the convent at Yuste to govern his hereditary dominions which he had professedly resigned to his son, and as far as possible still to control the empire where he had so long reigned. The retired merchant, unused to reading, and unaccustomed

to agriculture or the mechanical arts, having little taste, it may be, for the fine arts or for social life, finds life a burden, and sighs for his old employments and associations, for in his anticipation of this period he never allowed the idea to enter his mind that he should then have really closed all his plans of life; that as he had professedly done with the world, so the world has actually done with him.

How great, therefore, is the difference in the condition of a man of twenty and one of seventy years! To those in the former condition, the words of Milton in relation to our first parents, when they went out from Eden into the wide world, may not improperly be applied—

“The world was all before them where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide;”

those in the other case have nothing

which they can choose. There is nothing before them but the one path—that which leads to the grave—to another world. To them the path of wealth, of fame, of learning, of ambition, is closed for ever. The world has nothing more for them; they have nothing more for the world.

I do not mean to say that there *can* be nothing for an aged man to do, or that there *may* not be, in some cases, a field of usefulness—perhaps a new and a large one—for him to occupy. I mean only that this cannot constitute a part of his *plan* of life; it cannot be the result of a purpose formed in his earlier years. His own plans and purposes of life are ended, and whatever there may be in reserve for him, it is usually a new field—something which awaits him beyond the ordinary course of events; and

the *transition* from his own finished plans to this cannot but be deeply affecting to his own mind. I do not affirm that a man may not be useful and happy as long as God shall lengthen out his days on the earth, and I do not deny that there may be much in the character and services of an aged man that should command the respect and secure the gratitude of mankind. The earlier character and the earlier plans of every man should be such that he *will* be useful if his days extend beyond the ordinary period allotted to our earthly life. A calm, serene, cheerful old age is always useful. Consistent and mature piety, gentleness of spirit, kindness and benevolence are always useful. It is useful to the advancing generation, to show that, even amid the infirmities of age, there is enough to make a man calm, cheerful, happy; that

age is not necessarily morose or misanthropic ; that though a man has practically done with the more active enterprises of life, he does not cease to feel an interest in what occupies the attention of those who bear the heat and the burdens of the day, or even in the innocent amusements and pastimes of childhood and youth. It does good, moreover, to the advancing generation to afford them an opportunity of developing their own character, and manifesting their own kindness by showing proper respect for age, and by thus cheering those who are descending into the valley of years. By his mature counsels also, by his practicalwisdom, by the results of his long observation and experience, an aged man may do much to promote the welfare of the world ; and it may be a calamity that will be deeply felt by survivors, long

after his own plans of life shall have been ended and he is gathered to his fathers. If he cannot now form new plans to be executed by himself, he may infuse the results of his own long experience and observation into the plans formed by those in the vigor of life ; thus combining the wisdom of years with the ardor of youth. He may be the patron of learning, of science, of the useful or the ornamental arts ; he may mingle with others in the works of Christian charity ; he may do good by showing to the coming generation that there is, in his apprehension, much that is worth living for in this world, and much to hope for in the world to come ; or perchance there *may be* open before him in old age some new field of usefulness, unthought of in earlier life, that never entered into his own designs, but which may, after all, be that for

which he will be gratefully remembered, and will perpetuate his influence on the earth ; some field of charity to cultivate, some work of benevolence to perform, for which he has been spared to the world beyond the ordinary period allotted to man.*

* As an illustration of this last remark, it cannot be improper to refer to the case of one, a most venerable man, not long since removed from the world, John Adams, LL. D., for many years the well-known principal of Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass. His name is widely known and honored by those who enjoyed the benefit of his instructions. By his talents and learning and fidelity he made that institution what it was, and gave it the first place among the classical schools of the land.

He accomplished the work which he had contemplated, and then, after many years' service, carried out another plan which he had long cherished, of "retiring" from the post when he should have reached the ordinary term allotted to human life. He therefore resigned his position, and removed to what was then the new state of Illinois. Finding himself in robust health, unwilling—perhaps it might be said *unable*—to spend his time without some useful occupation, he employed himself, at first as a rec-

If an inference should be drawn from the above discussion, it should *not* be one of despondency and gloom. There are cheerful views which an aged man may take of life, perhaps not *less* cheerful than those which are taken in early years. If early life is full of hope, it is also often full of anxiety and uncertainty; if in advanced life the world has now nothing to offer to a man, it may be that much is gained by being free from the cares, the burdens, and the anxieties of earlier

recreation, in the establishment of Sabbath-schools. In this benevolent work he traversed the state, founded large numbers of Sabbath-schools, put the system on a permanent foundation during the period of nearly twenty years, and then, at the age of *ninety-one*, closed the *second* work of his life, venerated and honored by all. As the result of these mature labors, it is supposed that there are not less than fifty thousand children regularly in the Sabbath-schools in the state of Illinois, who would not have been there if it had not been for services he rendered to the church and the world *beyond* the period of "threescore and ten."

years ; if to such a one this world has nothing now to give, there may be much more than it ever gave even in anticipation, and infinitely more than it has given in reality, in the hope of the life to come—in the prospective happiness of heaven now so near.

But lessons of another kind may be drawn from this view, that may be valuable to those who are entering on life. They are such as the following :

They who are in early or in middle life should not look for happiness in that future period when they shall be laid aside by age, and prevented from engaging in the active duties and responsibilities of life. True happiness is found in useful employment ; in doing our duty ; in improving the present—not in dreams and visions of the future. They who are anticipating happiness in the distant fu-

ture on earth—when they shall reach old age—may not, probably will not, reach that period; and they may be much disappointed in their anticipations if they do.

The plans of this life should extend as far into the future as possible; so far, that if it can be done, they should embrace the whole of life: in other words, so that the time will never come when they shall feel that they have *nothing to do*.

The young and the vigorous should make the most of the present. The present is all that they can calculate on with any certainty, or with any such probability as to be the foundation of a plan of living.

All classes of men should so live that when the period of old age shall arrive, if they reach that period, they may be

able to look back on a life well spent—not with the embittered feelings that their lives have been wasted; not with the painful reflection, when they can form *no* plan of life, that the time when they *could* have formed a purpose that might have extended far into the future, and that might have benefited the world, was squandered and lost.

I may add also, that that man is indeed desolate who has reached the period of “threescore and ten” with no hope of a future life; with no evidence that he is prepared for heaven; with nothing to anticipate in a coming world. I shall not be understood as intimating that I regard religion as not valuable or necessary at any period of life: but in its earlier periods there *are* other things which may engage the attention; there are other hopes which may be before the

mind ; the world, then, has much to promise, if not much to give ; there are plans that may be formed that will engross the attention, hopes that may fill the mind with ardor, prizes to be won which seem to be worth all the effort which they will cost ; but what is there of this nature for the aged man at the close of life ? What plan, what hope can he now have if it is not derived from religion ? What is there for him to live for if it is not the life to come ? What a blank *must* existence now be to him if he has no prospect of life and joy beyond the grave !

II.

STANDING at this point of life, all men could see, if they would reflect, that there has been a higher plan or purpose, even in their own affairs, than their own ; and that there has been an influence continually bearing on themselves to carry out that higher plan. In other words, a man will often see that he has not accomplished what he designed to do, but perhaps the very reverse, in the execution of some higher purpose than his own.

If such reflections should lead one to recognize an overruling hand in his own life, and if it should lead to the conviction that there is a great comprehensive plan that embraces all human affairs, and

that makes all the individual purposes of men subordinate to that, it would be a result that might do much to enable him to form a just estimate of the real course of things. That there *is* a vast and comprehensive purpose, so to speak, *above us*—a purpose that embraces all our individual actions, and all the affairs of nations, making all tributary to the accomplishment of a high and eternal plan—as each fountain of water flowing noiselessly from the hillside, and each gentle rivulet, contributes to the formation of the great river that rolls into the ocean—is the clear teaching of the Bible, and may yet be recognized as the equally clear teaching of philosophy. The glory of that rivulet is not that it falls gently down the mountain side, or flows sweetly through the vale, beautiful as that may be, but that it *does* contribute to

swell the great river that thus rolls into the ocean. So the glory of a plan or act of man may be, that, though in itself too insignificant to be remembered, it *does* contribute to carry out the great plans of God—the plans that embrace eternity and infinity.

The point to which I am here advertising, that all human plans are made subservient to the accomplishment of a higher divine purpose, is clearly stated in the Bible. “A man’s heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps.” Prov. 16:9. “There are many devices in a man’s heart, nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.” Prov. 19:21. “The way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” Jer. 10:23. “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.”

Psa. 76 : 10. "I am God, and there is none else : I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Isa. 46 : 9, 10. This sentiment has been beautifully expressed also by the great poet :

"Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
When our deep plots do pall; and that should
teach us,
'There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.'"

Philosophy has not been willing to avow this as an admitted truth, but *history* is fast tending to it, and the time is not distant when no philosophy will be regarded as complete, as no history is, which does not recognize the idea. No man can furnish a correct explanation of

* Hamlet, Act 5, Scene 2.

the facts of history, isolated as they seem to be, who does not regard them as part of a vast system, under the superintendence of one Presiding Mind, with one great plan extending over the entire race of man, and embracing all kingdoms, empires, and lands. Each one of the events of the world, isolated as it may appear, becomes thus a part of a comprehensive scheme—entering into the *development* of the Divine purposes as really as the arrangement of the various separate particles in a tree or in the human frame is connected with its development in its perfect form; or as the little labors of the animalculæ become connected with the beautiful formations that rise above the sea in reefs or islands. The individual insect dies and is forgotten; the plan goes steadily forward.

It gives a new view of life in regard to

its value, when a man, however humble and obscure he may be, can recognize the Divine hand in his own course through the world, and can see that God has been accomplishing what he himself never contemplated or intended, and what he may himself not even now understand. He himself, like the insect in the formation of the coral reef, may pass away and be forgotten. There may have been nothing in his own work to perpetuate the memory of his individuality; the stone which friendship may erect over his grave may fall down, and the place where he sleeps in death may be unmarked and unknown; but he has become absorbed in a greater movement than his own individual plans, and a purpose higher than he has ever designed has been accomplished by his living on the earth.

It may seem to be mere vanity now to apply these remarks in any way to myself, but they are as applicable to one man as another, and they are now so applied only to illustrate this one general point, showing how life seems to a man when he approaches its close. The idea is, that at such a time a man will feel that his life has been shaped otherwise than he anticipated; that he has rarely carried out his own plans; that he has, in fact, pursued a different course from that which he or his parents designed; that he has failed much in what he intended, and that if he has accomplished anything, it has been in a great measure what he neither contemplated nor designed.

I had, when a boy, a young friend—a playmate, a schoolmate; he, like myself, being the son of a mechanic, and neither

of us with any other advantage than our other playmates and schoolmates had. From our early prospects and occupations we were both turned aside by the suggestions of a country schoolmaster, who persuaded us, with the somewhat reluctant assent of our parents, to leave our homes with a view to a course of studies preparatory to the profession of the law. My youthful friend, by talent and industry in the line thus contemplated, placed himself at the head of the legal profession in our native state, and ultimately occupied the highest judicial position in the state; accomplishing a purpose of which he never dreamed in early life, and illustrating the thought which I am endeavoring to set before you, that "there's a divinity that shapes our ends;" that "a man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps."

If it should be said that the case referred to is by no means an unusual thing; that it is, in fact, a matter of common occurrence, I admit that this is so, and it is for this very reason that I have adverted to it. It is to show that it *is* so common, I may say so universal, as to prove that there is over all things, and embracing all things, a great plan; that there is one presiding Intellect over all; that there is a God who has his own purposes, and who makes those of his creatures subordinate to his own; that, in fact, while they are free, he has the power to control them so as to carry out his own designs.

But what I wished particularly to advert to as pertaining to the matter before us, was, to show how this *appears* to a man who has reached the outer limit of human life, and who from that point looks

back over his own course. Few, if any, at that period, can look over life without recalling the fact that they have often been embarrassed in their way ; that they have met with many disappointments in their cherished plans ; that obstacles from unforeseen quarters have been thrown in their path ; nay, that they may have been compelled more than once to change their plans of life. At the time when these things occurred they felt them keenly. They were saddened by disappointment, and wept at their want of success ; they felt that even “the stars in their courses fought against them ;” they were envious at the success of others in whose path no obstacles seemed to be interposed ; and possibly they may have been tempted to murmur at what seemed to them an unjust and a partial government of the world—against that superior Power that

gave success to others, and frowned on their path. Now, in the review, however, all this seems to be changed. Those reverses are seen to have been under a wise direction, in order that they who were thus disappointed might accomplish what they had not designed to accomplish, as well as that their own spiritual and eternal good might be secured. So we now look over the history of the world, and see that the great changes which have occurred among the nations—the revolutions of states and empires, the reverses, the judgments, and the calamities which have come upon nations have all been necessary in the great movements of human affairs, and have all tended in some way to promote the ultimate welfare of man, and to contribute to the progress of the race.

For myself, if it will not be regarded

as mere vanity to refer to this, I may say that all this has been illustrated in my own life as it now seems to me in the review of the past. I have carried out none of the purposes of my early years. I have failed in those things which I had designed and which I hoped to accomplish. I have done what I had never purposed or expected to do. I have known what it was to weep at discouragements. I have been led along contrary to my early anticipations. I can now see, I think, that while I have been conscious of entire freedom in all that I have done, yet that my whole life has been under the absolute control of a Higher Power, and that there has been a will and a plan in regard to my life which was not my own. Even my most voluntary acts, I can see, have been subservient to that higher plan, and what I

have done has been done as if I had no agency in the matter.

It would not be proper to go into details here, and if I did, they would be such only as occur substantially in the life of every man, and which any one could recount at the age of seventy. It is not because there has been anything peculiar in my case that I advert to this, but merely to illustrate a general truth—to show you how life will *seem* to you when you review it at its close. If I have done anything in the world, what I have done has been from no original purpose or plan of my own ; if praise is due anywhere, it is not to me, but to Him who has directed my steps ; if I have been useful in any respect, it is because there was a controlling Providence that directed my path.

But if the personal reference may be

allowed, I may allude to what in fact has proved to be the principal work of my life, and that in which I have been more successful than in any other; I mean the preparation of notes or commentaries on the Sacred Scriptures. For this work I had made no special preparation, and it never entered into my early plans or expectations. I was led to it as a *side-work* altogether, and pursued it as a pleasurable occupation from day to day. I began merely with the design of preparing a few plain and simple notes on the gospels for the benefit of Sunday-school teachers. There was a demand for some brief explanation of the gospels for Sunday-schools, and it was certain that such a work would be furnished by some one. Three other gentlemen, each of them peculiarly qualified for the task, commenced the

preparation of such notes at about the same time, but each of them abandoned the design. With me the preparation of those notes on the gospels led to the *habit* of spending a small portion of each day in writing on some part of the Bible, at such a time as would not interfere with my regular duties as a pastor, until, to my own surprise, I found myself at the end of the New Testament, and until, to my greater surprise, as the result has shown, more than a million of volumes have been sold in this country and abroad, in my native tongue, and in languages which I cannot read or understand. If there may seem to have been some self-denial required in pursuing such a work for more than thirty years; in doing it in the early morning hours when the inhabitants of this great city were slumber-

ing round about me ; in pursuing it when burdened with the duties of a most responsible charge ; in going to my study in the early morning in all kinds of weather, cold, heat, storm, rain, snow ; if there seems to have been something like dogged perseverance in this—I would say that this does not appear to me now to be so. Nothing is plainer to my own apprehension, nothing more indelibly impressed on my mind in the review of the past, than that there was an unseen hand that guided me in this work from day to day, and an influence from above that prompted me to it ; that there was a demand in the state of the church that it should be done by some one ; that an emergency had arisen in the establishment of a new institution, the Sunday-school, for such a work ; that God gave me health, and strength,

and a love for the work with reference to its accomplishment; that he awoke me morning by morning for the pleasant task; that his hand guided my own in writing, and that, although conscious of being entirely voluntary, there was an overruling Providence, an overruling *Power*, that prompted to the conception of the task, and that led to its completion. I am constrained now to ask you to forgive this personal allusion—this reference in this public manner to my own labors. As I know my own heart, it is not in any spirit of boasting; it is only that I may now, at the end of my labors on earth, render the praise where the praise is due, and that I may illustrate a great truth of value to all, that “a man’s heart deviseth his way, but that the counsel of the Lord that shall stand;” that there is a supreme provi-

dence; that there is a God that rules over human affairs; that there is a great comprehensive plan to which all our plans are subordinate. I have no claim to merit, to praise, or to honor on account of what I have been enabled to do. I refer to it now with no such view. I am trying to show to those in earlier life how a man feels when he has reached the outer limits of his course; and what I wish to say is, that it then seems to him that there has been a divine hand in his course, and that his own plans, often frustrated, and whether successful or not, have all been subordinate to a much higher plan, in which all his purposes are absorbed and lost, and in which all that he does may be, in view of that vast plan, wholly insignificant—though like the little labor of the animalculæ in the coral reefs, his

toil may enter into the completion of a much higher design.

It is a great truth, confirmed more and more in the history of the world, that God *will* make the individual plans of men, and the purposes of nations, subservient to his own. Whether they design it or not, He will make all their schemes subordinate to that higher and vaster movement which is going forward in the history of the earth, as, also, He will make all the movements of the earth itself subordinate to the development of that vaster plan which embraces all worlds, making the universe one.

Life becomes great only when it is contemplated in connection with the purposes of an overruling Providence—with that scheme which comprehends all things. Men are great only, when,

in their rise and fall, they are regarded as connected with such a vast and comprehensive plan. Individuals and nations have their own purposes and plans. They are alike voluntary. They may be, or may not be, successful in their schemes. They alike pass away; they alike may be forgotten; but the great plan moves on. That, amidst the failures or the successes of other plans, is certain to be accomplished. "My covenant shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," is the language of God, alike in his word and in the course of events.

The individual workers pass away. The countless millions of the toilers on the earth disappear. The actors of other times, the builders of the pyramids, the hosts that composed the armies of Xerxes, Cyrus, Alexander, Cæsar, have all vanished. The builders of Thebes, of

Nineveh, of Babylon, of Rome, have all gone. The great orators, lawgivers, poets, conquerers, sages, philosophers, are withdrawn. The grave has closed over them, but the results of their conflicts, their toils, their genius, have gone into the history of the world, with God's greater plan that embraces and comprehends all. So the nations themselves pass away. Egypt, Assyria, the Grecian states, the Roman empire, the kingdoms that Alexander founded, the kingdoms of the Huns, the Goths, the Vandals—of Attila and Tamerlane—have passed away; but they were great in their history, because their rise and fall were parts of one comprehensive plan which embraces all people and all times, and which, when those parts are combined, will make the history of this world truly *great*.

III.

I SHALL now advert to a point which seems not improper to be dwelt upon by one who has reached the period of threescore and ten. It is, that it is a much greater thing to have lived through these seventy years just past than it was to have lived through any previous seventy years in the world's history. A similar remark, I have no doubt, will be made, and with much more force and propriety, by one who shall live through the next seventy years, and with still greater force and propriety in advancing periods of the world; but the remark has now a force which it could never have had before our time.

I mean by the remark that it has been a greater privilege to live during these seventy years than it would have been to live any seventy years previous to this period; that life has been worth more; that there have been more advantages for securing the great ends of living; that there has been more that a man could do; that life has been practically much *longer*, and that the responsibilities of living have been proportionally greater.

1. There have been times and countries, and there are still, where seventy years of human existence are of very little value. In such times and countries the world makes no progress. It is substantially the same at the beginning and the close of the period. There is no accumulation of wealth, of influence, of learning. In savage life the

same style of living prevails; the tents, huts, or houses are built in the same manner; the same modes of hunting, of fishing, or of cultivating the ground exist; the same manner of dress; the same modes of travel; the same kinds of amusement or pastime; the same rules of administering to the maladies of the sick; the same methods of war, and the same ideas in regard to the objects of living. Seventy years of savage life—what is it worth? The savage makes no progress, for his life at the beginning of such a period and at its close is the same. The same remark is also true in regard to nations which have emerged in some degree from savage life, and which have attained to a considerable degree of civilization. Seventy years of life in Egypt when the pyramids were built—what were they worth?

Seventy years in the middle ages in Europe—what were they worth? When, under the best circumstances, and with the highest aims, whole years of patient toil were to be spent in transcribing a volume of Plato or Aristotle; in copying the Sacred Scriptures; or in substituting the legend of a saint for one of the obliterated books of Livy; how much could be made of such a life? Seventy years in China now—seventy years at any period within three thousand years in China—what are they, what have they been worth? China, thousands of years ago, reached the highest point of civilization possible under the existing form of its institutions and its religion, and progress there is impossible until there shall be some great revolution; and life there three thousand years ago, for all the purposes pertaining to this

world or the world to come, was as valuable as it is now. A citizen of that nation can make no more of it now than he could have made then, and whether he lived at the one period or the other might have been a matter of perfect indifference, for it was in all respects, for learning, for travel, for science, for the arts, for domestic comfort, for social enjoyment, just as long at one time as at another; the world was just as large at one period as at another; the boundaries between known and unknown regions were the same.

2. But seventy years of life may be much more important, and may for all the purposes of living, be much longer at one period of the world than another. It is much more so now than it ever was or could be among savage tribes; than it was in Ancient Egypt or Assyria; than

it was or is in India or in China ; than it was in Scotland, in England, in France, or in Germany previous to the Reformation ; nay, than it was in our own country during the last century—it will be vastly more momentous and valuable—immensely *longer* in respect to all that can be made of life—in the next seventy years than it is now.

In most important respects the discoveries which have been made in our own times—the inventions and improvements in the arts of living—have been equivalent to making life twice, or thrice, or four times as long as it once was, or of adding twice, or thrice, or four times to the duration of human existence on earth. A man whose business is to travel, who can pass over as much in his journey now in one hour as would on a camel, or on a horse, or on foot,

have occupied twelve hours, has in this respect added eleven hours in such a journey to his life. In former times it required the slow labor of a monk two or three years to transcribe the Bible—a work which can now be performed by the art of printing in a few hours, including on an average, all the labor of type-setting, and stereotyping, of folding and of binding, and thus just so much has been added to the life of man. In the best days of Greece or of Rome, or in Arabia under the caliphs, or in the dark ages, an author might acquire celebrity who could send out a thousand copies of a work of his own, or secure their circulation; in this age a man *may* send out in different languages a million of volumes of his own to influence for good or for evil, the people of his own or foreign lands. So

much *may* life be worth now as compared with former times.* The same is true with regard to the machines for mowing, and reaping, and thrashing—for carding, and spinning, and weaving—for the communication of intelligence by letters, by the telegraph, and by newspapers—for the purposes of travel and and navigation—for the transfer of the products of the earth to market—for the manufacture of raw materials into

* Besides all that has been done in the circulation of the same works through other sources, the American Tract Society has published :

Of Baxter's Saints' Rest, nearly-----	300,000	copies.
Of Baxter's Call -----	400,000	“
Of Alleine's Alarm-----	250,000	“
Of Doddridge's Rise and Progress,--	200,000	“
Of James' Anxious Inquirer -----	150,000	“
Of their Tracts :		
No. 50 -----	1,227,000	“
No. 109 -----	612,000	“
No. 357 -----	1,045,500	“
No. 368 -----	989,000	“

And of many others more than half a million of copies each.

the forms that they are designed to assume in clothing, in coin, in structures of utility or ornament—in everything that ministers to domestic comfort or to public welfare. Any one may see the force of this remark if he will estimate the influence of the sewing-machine—an invention of our own age, and if he will calculate how much has been added to female life by this most ingenious invention — abridging more than one-half this portion of the labors labors of a family.

All this is equivalent to making life as many times longer, for all the purposes of wealth, of happiness and of knowledge, as has been saved by machinery and inventions. The unconscious powers of nature now accomplish a large part of what *was* done by human muscles, and do it better than it could

have been done by the unaided hand of man. The mere lengthening of life to the period of Methuselah would not in itself be equivalent to what has been gained in this manner; and for all the purposes of living, human life is now incomparably longer than it was in the time of the antediluvian patriarchs. The *aggregate*, so to speak, of human existence, is thus vast—more vast by far than it would have been to have *added* these years now saved to life in ruder periods of the world—for a man can accomplish incomparably more now than he could have done in other ages by any mere addition of days or years. The addition of a hundred years to the life of a monk would only have enabled him to transcribe a few more copies of the Bible—which can now be done in a few moments; the addition of any

number of years to the builders of the pyramids would have only enabled them to pile a few more stones on the vast mass ; the addition of any number of years to the life of a savage would have left him a savage still, and with nothing accomplished—with no advance towards civilization—with no accumulation of property or knowledge ; the addition of any number of years to an inhabitant of China would contribute little or nothing to the real duration of his life.

3. This is a different world from what it was seventy years ago. The universe, if I may so express it, is larger than it was then ; the earth is more ancient and more grand. It is true, indeed, that to the eye of an Omniscent Being the universe is the same ; but it is more vast as it appears to man. Every seventy years of the earth's his-

tory, except perhaps the period of the dark ages, has made the world different ; but no period of seventy years has made so great a change as that to which I now refer. There is not a science whose boundaries have not been greatly enlarged. Many of the most important discoveries in science, and inventions in the arts, which are to be developed in their influence on following ages, have started into being in groups and clusters. Worlds and systems have been brought into view unknown to man before.

The universe *above* is greater. During all that period, the astronomer has been pointing his telescope to the heavens, and penetrating the fields of blue ether, and revealing to man the wonders of the distant heavens ; enlarging the universe by all those measureless dis-

tances through which the eye has been made to penetrate. New stars have been discovered and mapped on the great chart of the heavens; a new planet as belonging to our system has been found from the fact of its disturbing influence on those before known—a planet on which no human eye ever before rested; a vast number of asteroids, fragments of a larger planet, have been seen to revolve between the orbit of Mars and Jupiter; and distant nebulæ, floating islands in the measureless distance, have been brought into view, and resolved into distinct and separate worlds.

The world *beneath* is greater and more wonderful than it was. The microscope was indeed known, as was the telescope, seventy years ago; but it had just begun to reveal the world beneath us.

It has not finished its work, but it has already disclosed a universe beneath us as unlimited and as wonderful as that above us. It has peopled every leaf in the forest, and every drop of water in rivulets, lakes, and oceans, with teeming multitudes of inhabitants, amazing us as much by their number, and by the delicacy, skill, and beauty of their organization, as the telescope does by the number and the magnitudes of the worlds above us. We find ourselves standing thus in a universe extending illimitably above and below us, as incomprehensible on the one hand as on the other: boundless space above filled up with worlds, where we thought there was an empty void, and beneath countless myriads of beings starting into life and playing their little part, where all seemed to be blank.

Our own earth is vaster and more grand than it was. Half a century ago, the prevailing—the almost universal belief was, that the earth was created six thousand years ago, in its essential structure as it is now—rocks, and seas, and rivers, and hills having been called into existence as they now are, by the immediate command of God: It began, indeed, to be whispered that it is older, and that important changes had occurred upon the earth before man appeared on it; or that the earth had a history before the history of the human race. I remember in one of the earliest stages of my education, meeting with a remark by Dr. Chalmers, designed to solve some of the growing difficulties from the new science of geology, that between the first and second verses of the book of Genesis there might be supposed to

have intervened an indefinite period of which no account was given, the purpose of inspiration having been first to attest the general truth that "*God created the heavens and the earth,*" or to secure this belief in the minds of men in opposition to the idea that the world is eternal, or is the work of fate or chance, and then, without detailing the intermediate history of the globe, to proceed at once to the main purpose of the volume, the history of the creation, the fall, and the redemption of man; that in fact the earth itself may have existed through a vast number of ages, and may have gone through an immense number of revolutions, with which man in his history was not particularly concerned, or which did not bear on the main purpose of the volume—the record of the fall and recovery of a lost race. What

was then almost conjecture in regard to the past history of the earth, has been verified. The prevailing opinions respecting its recent origin have been set aside. To all that was before regarded as grand in the conception of the earth, there is now added the belief that it has moved on its axis and in its orbit millions of ages; that successive generations of animals have been formed, and have acted out the purpose of their creation, and have disappeared for ever; that vast changes have occurred in the waters and on the land, displacing each other, and peopled again with new myriads of inhabitants appropriate to each, and then again to pass away; that immense deposits of minerals had been made by the slow progress of ages, fitted for the use of an order of beings that had not yet appeared; and that at

last man, to whom all these changes had reference, and for whom all the previous arrangements were designed, appeared upon the earth, a being of higher order—the last in the series that was to occupy the globe. With this view of the past, what a different object is the earth now from what it was seventy years ago!

A large part of the discoveries in science, the inventions in the arts, and the arrangements in the schemes of benevolence that are to affect future times, and whose bearings can now be scarcely appreciated, has been originated also in this period of the world. The power of steam was not indeed unknown before; but the great changes which it is destined to produce in the commerce of the world are the results of the inventions of this age. The railroad and the magnetic

telegraph have been originated in these times. Every science has been pushed forward. Elementary books of instruction have been changed, and those which were adapted to the condition of the world seventy years ago would be useless now. If I were now to begin my education again, a large part of the books which I studied when young would be valueless. I should, indeed, retain my Homer, my Virgil, and my Euclid; but the books in which I sought instruction in chemistry and geography and natural philosophy, would no longer represent the science of the world, or convey correct views to my mind. The books which I then studied belong to another age, and though they will serve to mark the steps by which the advances of science have been made, they will never again be a proper exponent of the true state

of knowledge among mankind. I see wonders around me which have sprung up anew. Every river, lake, and ocean is navigated by steam; an iron road is laid down everywhere, connecting all parts of a country together, along which are borne, by a power unapplied when I was young, the productions of agriculture, manufactures, and the arts, with a rapidity and a precision of which no one then could have formed a conception. A mysterious and incomprehensible network, like spiders' webs, is weaving itself over all lands, and making its way beneath deep waters, by which thought is transmitted simultaneously to millions of minds, and is diffused over distant lands regardless of mountains and of oceans. How different such a world from what it was seventy years ago!

In the same time there have sprung

also into being arrangements, then unknown, no less adapted to affect the moral and religious condition of mankind. The great enterprises of Christian benevolence, yet to result in the entire conversion of the world to God, have been originated in that time. The Bible was indeed in men's hands, and the gospel was preached, and the power of the press was known, but the serious thought had scarcely found its way into the minds of the friends of the Saviour, of bringing the combined influence of these agencies on the widest scale possible to bear on the unconverted portions of the race. Within the period of which I am now speaking, this thought has taken a firm possession of the Christian mind and heart, and the great work of the world's conversion has been entered on in earnest. The Bible has been translated

into nearly all the languages of the world ; the strongholds of the earth have been occupied as missionary stations ; millions of children are taught the great truths of Christianity from week to week in Sabbath-schools ; and a Christian literature is spreading its influence far and near over nominally Christian and Pagan lands. Whatever there is of power in these arrangements as bearing on the future, is the fruit of the spirit of this age ; and now, in reference to science, to the arts, to the efforts of benevolence—to the world above, the world below, the world in the past, and the world around us, the man of threescore years and ten sees a far different, a much *larger world* than it was when he began to live.

4. If now we take into consideration this idea of the vast enlargement of the boundaries of all knowledge during the

past period of seventy years; if we remember how different the world is from what it was at the commencement of that period; if we call to our recollection what has been done in the way of discovery and invention during that period; if we remember how much more of the earth has been explored and peopled during that period; if we think of the disclosures made by the telescope in the worlds above us, or by the microscope in the worlds beneath us; if we think of the advances in the sciences, in the arts, and in the arrangements of the schemes of benevolence that are to affect future times, and to determine the condition of the world in far-distant ages; if we attempt to follow out the bearings of the use of steam in manufactures and in commerce by land and by sea; if we could estimate the influence of the magnetic

telegraph on the affairs of nations ; if we could place ourselves back at the year eighteen hundred, and look at the world as it was then, in contrast with what it is now, we might form some estimate of what it has been to have lived during these seventy years, and some faint conception of what are and must be the privileges and responsibilities of those who, instead of *ending* life, are about to *start off* from life's beginning on the more glorious periods of the next seventy years : for to all human appearance, and beyond all question, the next seventy years will be more remarkable in the progress of discovery, in the development of the human powers, in the diffusion of the principles of liberty, and in the spread of the true religion, than any past period of the world. If one about to leave the world might shrink from its

responsibilities in living in such a period as that which is to succeed the present, yet he might be pardoned for being conscious, as I am, of a strong desire to witness the glory, the honor, and the progress of my native land, of the church, and of the world in such a coming age. There has never been a period when the prospects of the future were so bright and glorious; there has never been a period when, to a man on the verge of the grave, such a desire could have been so natural or so pardonable, or when the regret at leaving the world could have been so profound.

Our own country furnishes a better illustration of the thought which I am presenting than any other portion of the world. The period of threescore and ten years to which I am now adverting, began at the death of Washington, and

when the effects of his illustrious services and the principles of his policy were just beginning to develop themselves. A new nation was just founded. A new and but partially tried Constitution had been adopted. The experiment of self-government had not yet been fully tried. There were many doubts and many misgivings about the working of the new government under any circumstances; there were more doubts as to the question whether the form of government could be adapted to a nation of many millions—to vast and numerous states with very varied interests—to a population spreading over a continent. There were then sixteen states in the Union. There was a population of scarcely five millions. A narrow strip of territory on the Atlantic coast, scarcely now appreciable on a map, had been subdued and

cultivated ; there were a few small commercial towns—what would now be called *villages*—Charleston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, on that coast ; the great West had not been explored even by the most hardy travellers ; California, Oregon, Nevada, Nebraska, Minnesota, Kansas, were as much unknown as is now the centre of Africa. If I remember right, Mr. Monroe, when president, recommended that the vast and fertile lands of what now constitutes the state of Iowa, should be appropriated as a reservation to the Indian tribes as a region so remote that it would not be likely to be invaded and disturbed by the progress of civilization. No one could then anticipate what seventy years were to produce in our country under any ordinary system of development then known ; still less could any one have an-

ticipated the new powers which would be brought into existence for navigating our rivers and lakes, for conveying intelligence, for facilitating commerce, for the development of the vast unknown resources of the land. That same nation now—what is it as compared with what it was then! What a history has been the history of these seventy years! What a place will that history occupy in the general history of the world! What a nation is this as compared with what it was at the end of the last century! And though a man may himself have taken no part in these great movements; though he may have contributed nothing to make his country what it is; though he will soon pass away and his name never be remembered; yet, any one who has lived through this period may be pardoned for self-congratulation that the

beginning and the close of his life embrace such a period, and for finding satisfaction in the thought that he has been permitted to witness the developments of these seventy years. He who loves his country may rejoice in the thought that he has seen it pass safely through the times of its greatest danger ; that when, as soon he must, he closes his eyes on human things, he will see that country free in every part, and in reference to every one of its citizens ; that he will see a constitution which has been put to the utmost test, and which has been found equal to the test ; that he will see a government that in respect to vigor and adaptedness to a vast territory equals the hopes of the most sanguine, and surpasses the expectations of most of its founders ; that he will see one great united people, destined, in all hu-

man probability, to accomplish more for the good of man than all the nations of antiquity have done, or than is to be accomplished by any existing people on the globe.

IV.

I HAVE spoken of the past as the past now appears to me. It remains that I should say a few words of the future from the same point of view, near the close of what is commonly regarded as a long life.

It would be a proper question for any one to ask of a man who has reached that age; who may have been for half a century occupied in public life; whose position has given him an opportunity of extensive observation and of intercourse with the world; who has passed that time in a period when the world has undergone more important changes, and made more rapid progress than at any

former period; whose professional calling has made it his duty to acquaint himself with books and with the opinions that prevail in his time on morals, philosophy, and religion—how the world seems in regard to the future. Is it dark and gloomy, or is it bright and hopeful? Is it growing better or worse? Is there hope for the future, or is the mind overwhelmed with sad forebodings? Has the world made progress, or is it in a retrograde movement? Is there hope for those in earlier life—hope for their country, hope for the church, hope for the interests of religion, of humanity, of liberty? Does it seem now that all that cheered in the days of youth, and that prompted to generous aspirations then, was illusive, false, and vain? Could a man, with the experience of seventy years, now enter on life with any bright

hopes of the future—with anything to stimulate and animate in reference to the prospects of the race? These are fair questions for any one to ask. He who has reached the period of threescore and ten, *ought* to be able to answer them.

It cannot be denied, as I have already remarked, that there are aged men who see nothing but darkness and gloom in the prospects of mankind ; who feel that the world is much worse than it was when they looked out on it in youth, full of hope ; who despair of any permanent reformation of the race, and of the removal of existing evils by any means that man can employ, or by any development of principles already existing, and who look for the removal of those evils only by some new and miraculous Divine manifestation ; who anticipate that the world is to become worse until the necessity of

such intervention shall become apparent to all men in the utter failure of all human efforts at improvement and reform. Nor can it be denied that there are many in early life who suppose that these are the common views and feelings of old men ; that aged men are necessarily peevish, disappointed, soured, and melancholy ; and that, whatever may have been their early hopes in regard to the world, their sun is setting amid thick clouds and darkness. Is this necessarily so ? Have aged men no better views or prospects than these to set before those who are to succeed them on the great theatre of human affairs ?

These questions naturally divide themselves into two parts, or relate to two subjects : *First*, how a man at “three-score and ten” regards the future prospects of this world. *Second*, how he him-

self feels in regard to the future state, or what are his hopes in reference to that world on which he is so soon to enter.

For very obvious reasons there would be an impropriety in referring in this manner to the latter. The remarks which I shall make, therefore, will pertain only to the former.

The opinion which I shall express may have little value in itself. It will show, however, that an aged man *may* take cheerful views of life, of the world, of the certain progress of the race, of the destiny of man. What, then, are the prospects of the world in regard to the future?

I look at two things: at the predictions in the Bible, and at the course of events, as tending to the fulfilment of those predictions.

1. The predictions in the Bible. Be-

lieving, as I have believed for fifty years, that the Bible is a revelation from God, and confirmed more and more, as I have been, in that belief by the study of that volume for more than forty years, I naturally turn to it alike in reference to the future condition of this world, and to my own hopes. I find there, as pertaining to the prospects of the world, such statements as the following: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." Isa. 35 : 1. "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain ; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Isa.

11 : 6-9. "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders ; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day ; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee : but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down ; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself : for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy gates shall be open continually ; they shall not be shut day nor night ; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought." Isa. ch. 60. "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given ; and the government shall be upon his shoulder : and his name shall be called

Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever." Isa. 9 : 6, 7.

"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish ; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. His name shall endure for ever : his name shall be continued as long as the sun ; and men shall be blessed in him : all nations shall call him blessed." Psa. 72. "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, . . . and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that

all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." Dan. ch. 7. To such a time, when peace and righteousness and prosperity and knowledge and pure religion shall pervade the earth, all the prophecies in the Sacred Scriptures undoubtedly tend. No one can close the perusal of the Bible without the feeling that, according to that book, the time is coming when universal peace will prevail on the earth, and when the true religion, with all its unspeakable blessings, will pervade the world. The prophetic writers, many of whom were aged men, and

many of whom had experienced much of the depravity of the world, and many of whom had lived in times of crime and disaster, were not gloomy, sad, dispirited, morose, and disappointed men. No men have ever lived who have cherished brighter views of the future condition of man; no heathen sages or philosophers were so cheerful and hopeful when they looked onward to the future state of the world. How *can* a man who believes that book, and who confides in those predictions, look with dark and sad forebodings on the future? How *can* he believe that the affairs of men are destined constantly to grow worse?

2. The course of events. I believe that this coincides now with the predictions in the Bible in regard to the future in our world. I think I see indications that human affairs are tending to that

state when science, liberty, justice, pure morals, and the Christian religion will pervade the earth; when all those predictions in the sacred volume will be accomplished. I look at these things:

(1.) In the progress of human affairs nothing is lost that is of value. We have all now that was valuable in Egyptian, Grecian, Roman, Alexandrian, or Arabian civilization, alike in their philosophy, their science, their arts, their jurisprudence, their principles of freedom. Nothing that was ever of value to mankind has been lost; there is nothing which has been lost of which the world would be the gainer now if it could be recovered; there is nothing which has been dropped which has not been superseded by something better, and superseded by it *because* it is better. In like manner, nothing can hereafter

destroy those great improvements and inventions which have contributed so much to the world's progress in our time. Combined with that which the past has transmitted to us, these things go into that vast accumulation of forces which are to mould and bless the world in all time to come. What can now destroy the printing-press, the telescope, the microscope, the railroad, the steamboat, the magnetic telegraph? What can now obliterate from the memory of mankind those great principles of justice, of liberty, and of law, which enter into modern civilization?

(2.) The old systems that have tyrannized over men have lost their power, and have died out, or are dying out never to be revived. This is true alike in religion and in all forms of civil government.

IN RELIGION. The systems of ancient

Paganism have died out never to be revived. There is not now on the earth a worshipper of the ancient gods of Babylon, of Egypt, of Greece, or of Rome, and not one of the temples erected for their worship will be rebuilt or repaired. The temple of Bel in Babylon, the magnificent structures in Thebes, the Parthenon at Athens, and the Pantheon at Rome, are desolate for ever so far as the design for which they were raised is concerned; nor is there now, nor will there be hereafter, a single human being who will ever offer a bloody sacrifice there, or cast a grain of incense on their altars. All that there was in those religions to degrade mankind, or to pander to vice, has passed away never to be revived.

The same is true of the existing systems of Paganism. Whatever may be the power or influence of such systems

on the world up to a certain period in society, a time comes when that power ceases, and when they show themselves not to be adapted to an advanced period of the world. It might be difficult to *prove* that the systems of Paganism in the Babylonian Empire, in Egypt, in Greece, or in Rome, materially interfered with the civilization of those states and kingdoms up to the point which they actually reached ; it might, in like manner, be difficult to *prove* that the systems of Brahminism or Buddhism have interfered with the civilization of India or China up to the point which they have reached, but it is clear that neither could be adapted to a higher civilization ; in other words, that if the sciences and arts existing in Europe should be transferred to India or China, those religions must vanish. They cannot be adjusted to that

state of higher development, but must retard and oppose it. They have had their day, and have exhausted themselves, and are destined to lose their hold on the world, whatever may succeed them : in other words, they are destined to *die out*, as have the old systems of Babylon and Rome.

The same is true of the Papal power. It has had its day. Does any one now believe that the power which was wielded over the nations of Europe by Gregory VII., by Innocent III., or by Boniface VIII., can be revived? Can the power of dethroning kings and of laying kingdoms under an interdict be restored? Will the time come again when princes will turn pale on their thrones, and nations tremble, at the threatening of an Italian priest? Can the Inquisition be revived again in the world? Is there to

be another Philip II. ; another duke of Alva to drench whole provinces in the blood of martyrs ; another Mary to light again the fires of Smithfield ? To ask these questions is to answer them.*

IN MATTERS OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT. The old dynasties that tyrannized over man have likewise passed away, never to be reëstablished. The tendency in civil affairs is everywhere to liberty, to equality, to the overthrow of the old systems of tyranny ; to the establishment of institutions founded on the rights of man. Can the days of Nero, of Caligula, of Philip II., of Richard III., and of Henry VIII. return again ? Would such men be permitted now to occupy any of the thrones of earth ? No. Those

* For a full illustration and proof of this point, compare Hallam's "View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages," vol. 1, chap. 7, pp. 402-496.

days have passed. The scenes which occurred under their reigns are not to be renewed. There is a spirit abroad in the world—IN ALL THE WORLD—which would prevent it, and the bloody scenes of civil tyranny, as well as of fiery religious persecution, pertain to the past. Whatever may occur, the future historian will have no such deeds to record, and the catalogue of monsters on thrones is filled up. Nations would combine against such monsters, and fleets and armies would hasten to hurl them from their thrones.

(3.) I look then at the accumulation of the *forces* now in existence in favor of progress, of order, of law, of liberty, of just government, of the rights of man, of truth, of religion.

Those forces consist of all the discoveries and inventions of ancient and mod-

ern times ; of all that has been accomplished in the arts, in philosophy, in jurisprudence, in medicine, in law, in political science, in theology ; of the recorded results of all the profound thinking of the great intellects of the world ; of all that constitutes modern civilization ; of all that tends to progress in agriculture and the mechanic arts ; of all the arrangements for domestic comfort ; and of all that enters into the merchandise and commerce of the nations of the earth. It is to be remembered that the tendency of each and all these things is to elevate, and not to debase and degrade mankind ; that each and all move the world forward and not backward. It is to be remembered, also, that all these things are really connected with the interests and happiness of mankind, and that the world will sooner or later

perceive this, and *act* on the idea; for nothing is plainer than that industry, temperance, justice, honesty, truth, charity, knowledge—that all the virtues, including all that there is in true religion, really coincide with the prosperity and happiness of nations and individuals, nay, that they are essential to prosperity and happiness. The world, slow in learning it, is beginning to see this. It will ultimately perceive it clearly. Men will not always be blind to their own real interests, and all these things, therefore, constitute a vast accumulation of *forces*—the gathered results of ages—bearing on the future welfare of the race, and making certain the future prosperity and happiness of the world.

(4.) I look, then, at the accumulation of these things in their relation to Christianity, and to the probability of its prev-

alence in the world. It might be shown, I think, that this is the only existing form of religion that *promises* to be permanent on the earth, or that if there is to be ultimately a *universal* religion, this is the only one that would be adapted to such universality in the higher forms of progress to which the race will rise. As I have already remarked, the ancient systems will not be revived, and there is no one of the existing forms of heathenism that is making progress *against* Christianity; no one, in fact, that is not silently melting away before it.

But this is not precisely the idea which I am now submitting to your consideration. It is, that those things to which I have referred as *forces* acting on society and the world, have a close, I believe, an *essential* connection with Christianity. They become incorporated with it. They

go with it. They carry Christianity with themselves wherever they go. For, those things which now most mark the progress of the world, have been originated in close connection with Christianity; if not directly *by* it, yet in connection *with* it, and under its fostering care. The art of printing, the mariner's needle for any practical purposes, the labor-saving machines, steam, the magnetic telegraph, the improvements in naval architecture, the comforts of domestic life, the telescope, the microscope—these, and similar things, have either been originated by Christianity, or have grown up with it, and are identified with it, and go forth with it wherever it is diffused. They are *to be* connected, and not to be separated, in all time to come.

It is to be borne in mind, also, that the commerce of the world is mainly in

the hands of Christian nations, and, for the most part, is conducted by *Protestant* nations. A Chinese or a Hindoo ship never crosses the ocean for purposes of commerce; Africa sends forth no vessels for commercial purposes except those which have been built or bought by a Christian colony; savage islands send forth none; and few are those, and those not increasing, which sail from Roman-catholic ports—from Spain, or Portugal, or Italy, or Brazil, or Austria—from any Roman-catholic ports save those of France. The tendencies of trade and commerce are to spread the Christian religion; to impress the world with the value of that religion; to open the way for its diffusion; to secure its diffusion in the best and purest form in which that religion exists—in the form of Protestantism. No one, it

seems to me, can doubt what is to be the ultimate result of these great movements on the destinies of man.

(5.) From this point the world will not go back. Can we believe that from all this the world is to recede to the savage state; that the experience of the past is to be of no value in regard to the future; that the race is to *relapse* into barbarism; that the world is deliberately to prefer the state of society which existed before Greece and Rome were civilized—the civilization of the middle ages in Europe, or the low state of civilization in India or China—to that which exists in Germany, in France, in England, in the United States of America? What is to become of the printing press; of the telegraph; of the machinery now driven by steam; of observatories; of the telescope; of the mi-

croscope ; of the mariner's compass ; of the quadrant ; of reaping machines, and mowing machines, and sewing machines ? What is to become of the works of Bacon, and Newton, and Shakespeare, and Milton ? What is to become of the treatise of Adam Smith on the Wealth of Nations ? What is to become of our school books ? What is to become of the Bible ? No. These things are not to be lost to the world. They constitute a defence against the return of ignorance, of despotism, of slavery, of superstition, of the inquisition, of savage barbarity. All this accumulation of forces tends in one direction—experience, science, the wisdom of the past, commerce, inventions in the arts, all are connected with law and order ; with peace and prosperity ; with liberty and the rights of man. They are never to be

identified with ancient pagan systems of religion revived, or with modern pagan systems; with universal anarchy; with tyranny; with slavery; with skepticism. They will have their widest prevalence, and their most far-reaching influence only when the Christian religion shall pervade the world.

And can a man, looking at these things, be gloomy, doubtful, disappointed, sad, in reference to the future condition of the world? Shall he close his life in darkness and despair in regard to the earth which he is about to leave? *Can* he who has lived seventy years at such an eventful period as this; who has marked the progress of things for that long course of years; who compares the present with what the world was when he entered on life—*can* such a man be desponding, gloomy, sad? And can or

should a young man who looks out on the world on which he is about to enter, can or should he look forward only to anticipated disorder, darkness, augmented crime, anarchy and the loss of all these things? Does he enter on a field where there is nothing to cheer and animate him in honorable efforts for the good of mankind? No, no. Never in the history of the world did young men enter on their career with so much to cheer them, to animate them, to inspire them with hope, to call forth their highest powers for the promotion of the great objects which enter into the civilization, the progress, and the happiness of man.

The opinions of a man at seventy years of age have been long maturing, and he is not likely, materially, to change them. I shall cherish these views till

I die, and I shall close my eyes in death with bright and glorious hopes in regard to my native land, to the church, and to the world at large ; I hope and trust, also, with a more bright and glorious hope in reference to the world to which I shall go.

My work for good or for evil is done. I cannot go back and repair what has been amiss ; I cannot now do what has been left undone ; I cannot do in a better manner what has been imperfectly performed ; I cannot recover the hours that have been wasted ; I cannot correct the evils which may have resulted from my errors ; I cannot overtake and arrest what I have spoken or written, as it has gone out into the world ; I cannot summon back the opportunities for usefulness which have been neglected ; I cannot obliterate the reality or the mem-

ory of wrong thoughts, or wrong motives, or wrong words, or wrong actions. All that has been thought or said or done in these seventy years has become fixed as a reality never now to be changed. Past errors and follies may be forgiven, but they are never to be changed. The hope of a man at seventy years of age—at any age—is not that the errors, and sins, and follies of the past can be changed: it is only that they may be pardoned by a merciful God; that they be covered over by the blood of the atonement; that though they must remain for ever *as facts*—facts fully known to the Great Searcher of hearts—their guilt may be so taken away that they will not be punished; that by the blood shed on the cross they themselves may be so *covered* over—so hidden—that they will not be disclosed

on the final trial before assembled worlds. That hope the religion of Christ offers to all. But to all it is *a fact* that life, in all its thoughts, words, actions, becomes *fixed and unchangeable*, as it passes along—as if a river should become *petrified* as its waters flow on towards the ocean, whether its waters be pure or impure, clear or turbid—fixed with all that they bear on their surface, or carry forward in their deep volume. How different would men try to make their lives if they felt habitually that all—literally all—that they do, or say, or think—even their most fugitive thoughts—becomes thus fixed and unchangeable *for ever*.

All men are imperfect; and a man when so near the end feels this more sensibly than he does at an earlier period. This will be now his true, his only real consolation—not that he has any

merit of his own; not that he has performed any works of righteousness which deserve the divine favor; not that he has made up at one time of life, or in one form of duty, what he has failed to do in another; not that his imperfections have been so trivial or unimportant that they might easily be overlooked by a just God, or that they would not in themselves exclude him from the divine favor; not that he might hope for salvation on the ground of his own character, notwithstanding these imperfections: no, no, none of these things. No well-founded hope of heaven *ever rests* on these grounds. It is only on the ground that our sins, and imperfections, and errors, have *not* been so great, as they *could not* be so great, as to make it impossible to be saved by the mercy of God through the atone-

ment of Christ; that the merits of the Redeemer are above all the demerits of our sins, and are ample to save from those sins; that the provisions for pardon and salvation are as free as they are ample—as available as they are vast; that Christ “tasted death for every man;” that the offers of salvation are made to one as well as to another—made so freely to all, that “whosoever will,” may come and “take the water of life.” The hope of man, of any and of every man, in my sober judgment, and I would utter it with all the solemnity which can be derived from my time of life, and from the fact that I am not far from the grave, is found alone in “The blood of Jesus Christ which cleanseth from ALL SIN.”

But the view which a man is constrained to take of himself as a sinner as he reviews the past, need not prevent

him from cherishing grateful reflections in regard to his general course of life, or from finding happiness in the consciousness that he has aimed to do right, however imperfectly his purposes have been carried out. It was not in a spirit of boasting or self-righteousness that the apostle Paul referred so often to his own upright life and aims; it was not inconsistent with his deep and permanent conviction of his own entire destitution of all merit as a ground of hope, that he referred to his conscientious endeavors to live an upright life, or that he commended his own course as an example to others. Paradoxical as it may seem, it was the same Paul that said, "I know that in me [that is, in my flesh] dwelleth no good thing. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

“God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ”—that said also, elsewhere, “I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day,” Acts 23:1; “We have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man,” 2 Cor. 7:2; “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample,” Phil. 3:17; “Ye know after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind and with many tears. I have kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, and have taught you publicly and from house to house. I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel,” Acts ch. 20, and that said of himself when

he was about to die, "I have fought a good fight; I have kept the faith," 2 Tim. 4:7.

Imperfect as the life of any man may have been, and pained as he may be in view of its short-comings and failures, yet he may have cheerful recollections, and may find happiness in reflecting that he has been engaged in a righteous cause, and that his aim has been to promote the welfare, temporal and eternal, of his fellow-men.

As a man stands on the verge of the grave, and looks out on the eternal world now *very near*, it will not grieve him to reflect that he has sincerely endeavored to live a life of virtue, temperance, justice, and charity; that he has by example and by precept commended to the world a way of living which would be for the good of all;

that he has endeavored to save men from ruin by bringing before their minds the way of salvation, and by warning the sinner of his danger ; that he has sought to acquaint the world with the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and the doctrine of the atonement for sin, and the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and to inspire men with the hope of a better life ; that he has sought to make all men better, purer, happier, and to diffuse abroad over all lands, faith in a pure religion. It will be a consolation to him then to reflect that he has *not* sought to destroy the faith of men in God, in the Saviour, in the Bible, in the immortality of the soul, in the future state ; that he has done nothing to counteract the efforts of parents to train up their children in the ways of virtue, temperance, and pure religion ;

that he has endeavored to persuade men to love their country, to love their race, and to strive to promote the welfare of the whole world, irrespective of the limits of rank, of complexion, or of geographical boundaries.

There are two kinds of reflection which men have when they come to review their lives in the prospect of the eternal world. The one arises from the conviction of their own minds that their lives have been wasted ; that they have prostituted their talents for purposes of evil ; that they have lived to counteract the efforts of the friends of virtue and religion, and to spread error and delusion over the world ; that they have by their writings or their lives unsettled the faith of men in God, in the Bible, in the Saviour, in the hope of a future life ; that they have lived to make men skeptics,

and to fill the world with doubt and despair. The other arises from the consciousness, that, however imperfect they may have been, they have sought to make men better, purer, happier ; to hold before the guilty and dying the truth that there is a God and a Saviour ; to show to all that there is something worth living for ; to light up hope, and peace, and joy, in a dark world of sin and sorrow.

I urge now, in conclusion, the fact that solemn reflections on the past must occur when one reaches the closing scene of life, and that a man will then wish to find evidence that he has so lived as not to lead others astray from the path of virtue, or to weaken their faith in God, or to destroy their hope of a better life, as a motive addressed to the young, and to all classes of persons, for

lending their names and their influence to the cause of virtue, of temperance, of truth, of pure religion. No man regrets such a course when he comes to die.

My life has been a favored life. I know not that I have an enemy on the earth—that there is one human being that wishes me ill. I am certain that no wrong has been done to me, the recollection of which I desire to cherish, or which it is not easy to forgive.

“So glide my life away! And so, at last,
My share of duties decently fulfilled,
May some disease, not tardy to perform
Its destined office, yet with gentle stroke,
Dismiss me weary to a safe retreat
Beneath the turf that I have often trod.”

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